

Child Care Spaces

Highlights:

- As of June 2020, BC has funded more than 13,000 quality, affordable, licensed child care spaces in communities across the province.
- MLA Throness has criticized government for having a goal of creating 24,000 new spaces within 3 years, saying only 2,400 functioning spaces have been created before the COVID-10 pandemic.
- MLA Throness previously claimed that between 2005 and 2017, BC created 39,959 funded child care spaces. However, that is the number of spaces receiving operating funding in a given year, not new spaces created by government.

Contrast:

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Solution:

- I'm glad to see the Opposition's new interest in childcare.
- For too long Members on that side ignored the issue. They ignored parents struggling with high costs of childcare and the huge challenge of trying to find a safe, licensed space.
- Since our Government was elected, we have made different choices. I'm so happy to tell them about the historic and transformational investment we are making in childcare.
- Since July 2018, we have approved funding for over 10,300 new licensed spaces.
- More than 2,000 spaces are now open to parents – and more are opening every month.
- The actions we have taken are helping parents save up to \$1,600 per month on child care costs.
- And almost 29,000 children are now in our \$10 per day child care sites.
- When our government was elected the shortage of childcare was a crisis.
- Fixing the problem won't happen overnight, but we're making progress - we know there's more to do, but we've made a commitment to BC families and we're keeping it.

How can you say you're funding new spaces, when the majority of the funding is going to existing spaces. Is this true?

- Parents want peace of mind when they place their kids in child care.
- Licensed child care ensures the highest standards of safety and early childhood development.
- Becoming licensed also allows providers to care for more children, increasing the number of spaces.
- That's why we have always said our commitment is to create licensed childcare spaces for families - and that is what we are doing.

How can government claim 10,400 new spaces when DataBC shows you've only created 5,717?

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Didn't the old government fund over 39,000 spaces?

- The member knows that that's not true.
- The number he is quoting were not new spaces created by government.
- It took them 4 years to create 4,312 new spaces.
- We created that many in the first 10 months of our space creation program.

Validators

Copyright

- Candice Smith, owner of Growing Minds Childcare (Incorporated business, Chase), BC Gov news, Jan/20

Copyright

- Hope Norum, manager of Canoe Valley Community Association (Non-profit, Valemount), BC Gov News, Jan/20

Copyright

- Charlotte Streicek, owner of the Dragonfly Discovery Centre (Incorporated business, Invermere), BC Gov News, Jan/20

Validators Continued

Copyright

- Madeleine Cott, early childhood educator at Little Peak Childcare (Incorporated business, Squamish), BC Gov News, Jan/20

Copyright

- Terry Taylor, SD 10 Superintendent of Schools, Nov 2019

Validators Continued

Copyright

- Wanda Dunn, Owner of Monkey Do's Childcare Centre (Cranbrook), Cranbrook Townsman, Nov 2019

Copyright

- Sue McKortoff, Mayor of Osoyoos, BC Gov News, Sept 2019

Background:

- As of June 2020, BC has funded more than 13,000 new, affordable licensed child care spaces in communities across the province.
- Since the launch of government's space creation initiatives in summer 2018, just over 2,000 spaces have been funded and are now open to parents.
- The Opposition criticized the announcement, saying BC had only created 5,717 new spaces in the government's first 2 years in office and this data can be found on DataBC.
- The 5,717 figure represents both government and privately funded spaces.
- The Opposition further stated when they were in government, they created 39,959 funded spaces between 2005 and 2017, or an average of 3,330 net new spaces per year for 12 years.
- The Opposition's statistics are not direct comparisons: the 39,000 is the number of spaces that are receiving Child Care Operating Funding.
- These were not necessarily created with the support of government funding and may be privately funded. By comparison, the 3,000 new spaces are being created with the help of funding through the Childcare BC New Spaces Fund or the Start-Up Grants program.
- For a direct comparison, the previous Child Care Major Capital Program funded:
 - Nov. 17, 2014: 1,006 new spaces
 - June 5, 2015: 1,488 new spaces
 - June 1, 2016: 1,818 new spaces
- In addition, funding was announced by the current government for 3,806 spaces in December 2017 under the Child Care Major Capital Program. The call for applications for this funding was under the previous government in early 2017.
- Since launching in February 2018, the Childcare BC plan has helped parents save more than \$320 million through the Affordable Child Care Benefit and Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative.
- Through these initiatives, almost 29,000 families have received child care for \$10 a day or less since September 2018.

Budget 2020: Child Care

Highlights:

- Budget 2020 continues to invest in Childcare BC, bringing the total investment in child care programs to \$2 billion over 3 years.
- In response to the budget, First Call said they were hoping to see more investments for families in the budget while the Association for Advancing Early Childhood Education and Educators in BC said: “third year of good news for child care in BC.”
- The Opposition criticized Budget 2020 for not delivering on universal \$10/day childcare. MLA Wilkinson claims the old government provided 28,000 child care spaces for \$10/day or less.

Contrast:

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Why didn't Budget 2020 have more investments for childcare?

- I am very proud of the record investments our government is making in child care for BC families.
- We know families need affordable, accessible and quality childcare.
- That's why we launched Childcare BC in 2018 and since then, we've invested \$1.4 billion in our plan.
- With Budget 2020, we're investing a record \$2 billion in child care programs that will help families all across our province.
- Our strong investments will help fund new child care spaces, improve the quality of existing child care spaces and train up Early Child Care Educators.
- Our government's child care initiatives have helped parents save nearly \$400 million.
- This means we've put \$1,600 back in the pockets of families each month.
- Our approach to child care means 28,000 families are paying \$10 a day or less for child care.
- We will keep working hard to make sure that families in BC have access to the affordable and quality child care that they need.

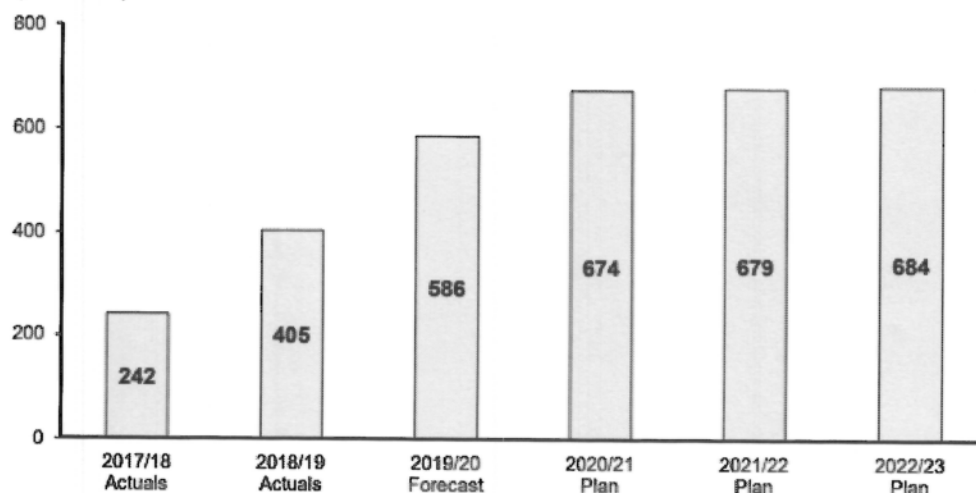
Solution:

- Since our Government was elected, we have made different choices.
- I'm so happy to tell them about the historic and transformational investment we are making in childcare.
- We want to make life more affordable for families and our investments are helping do just that.
- Families are saving up to \$1,600 each month on child care costs.
- Families of over 28,000 children are paying \$10 a day or less for their child care.
- Since July 2018, we have approved funding for over 10,400 new licensed spaces.
- More than 2,000 spaces are now open to parents – and more are opening every month.
- We are also investing in Early Childhood Educators.
- We've provided more than 5,400 bursaries to students in this field since September 2018.
- Fixing the problem won't happen overnight, but we're making progress.
- We know there's more to do, but we've made a commitment to BC families and we're keeping it.

Background:

- Childcare BC was launched in 2018 as government's plan to bring affordable, accessible and quality childcare to families throughout the province.
- Since its launch, funding for Childcare BC reaches \$1.4 billion over 3 fiscal years, bringing the total childcare programs to a record \$2 billion over 3 years.
- Investments will continue to create thousands of child care spaces, build and improve the quality of facilities and increase the workforce.
- In the last 2 years, government has funded over 10,400 new child care spaces.
- Child care initiatives have helped parents save nearly \$400 million through the Affordable Child Care Benefit and Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative, putting up to \$1,600 dollars back into the pockets of families each month.
- These combined supports have helped families of over 28,00 children to pay \$10 per day or less for child care.
- More than 11,000 early childhood educators throughout BC received a \$1 per hour increase since January 2019, with another \$1 per hour increase to come in April 2020.
- In addition, the Education Support Fund has provided more than 5,400 bursaries since September 2018 for students pursuing a career in childcare of upgrading their certifications.
- Budget 2020 – Three Year Fiscal Plan (pg. 18):

Chart 1.1.1 Child Care Programs
(\$ millions)



ACCB Rate Increase

Highlights:

- A parent, who is currently receiving ACCB, wrote to the Minister requesting an increase to the CCFRI for children ages 3-5.
- It is possible the parent or the provider was confused by the announced ACCB rate increase, which was planned for January 2019.
- In Budget 2018, the Province announced the ACCB, which is providing increased funding to eligible parents across B.C., including proposed rate increases for licensed care types, starting with an increase to licensed infant/toddler rates, followed by an increase to other licensed care types' rates in Years 2 and 3.

Contrast:

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Solution:

- Our Government is making different choices and making life more affordable for families.
- I'm so proud of the historic and transformational investment we're making in child care.
- Our government's child care initiatives have helped parents save nearly \$400 million.
- Families are saving up to \$1,600 each month on child care costs.
- Families of over 28,000 children are paying \$10 a day or less for their child care.
- The ACCB is ensuring savings for families for the two most expensive types of care – infant and toddler.
- The ACCB also increased the eligible income threshold so more families can benefit, regardless of the type of care –up to \$111 thousand a year qualify.
- Based on the success of the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative, we decided to prioritize funding as it lowers fees for families regardless of income.
- This aligns with recommendations from key stakeholders and ensures that more families can benefit as we build a universal system.
- Fixing the problem won't happen overnight, but we're making progress.

- This is an approach supported by the Provincial Child Care Council and \$10-a-day advocates, who suggest that a universal system should not be reliant on an income-tested initiative such as ACCB.
- In addition to the Budget 2018 materials, the Ministers also committed to increasing rates for other licensed care types in the ACCB launch on September 6, 2018 and made mentions of the proposed increases in other speaking commitments in early 2019. To date, there have been no questions about the rate increases in the media or from the public.
- Media Interest: In general, child care is often talked about in media; however, it is unlikely that this will be reported on specifically.

ECE Providers – Shortage and Wages

Highlights:

- The new Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy announced Sept 2018 includes a \$1/hour wage enhancement in 2019 for eligible ECEs and another \$1/hour in 2020, as well as on-the-job training opportunities, ECE education supports, and new post-secondary spaces.
- Providers may suggest the wage enhancements are not adequate and may ask why it is tied to those approved for the fee reduction initiative.
- The BC Child Care Owners' Association has stated they are working together to raise fees in order to raise wages: Copyright

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Contrast:

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Solution:

- Early childhood educators are the heart of B.C.'s child care system.
- They help children in their earliest stages of life and the work that they do needs to be valued.
- As we add new licensed spaces, we know we also need to build up the workforce.
- In September 2018, we launched a comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy.
- We are investing \$136 million to boost wages and deliver new supports for training, development and recruitment.
- ECEs got a dollar an hour boost retroactive to September 1st, 2018 and will receive another dollar an hour increase in April.
- This wage enhancement has already provided more than \$19 million to almost 11,500 ECEs to date.
- We invested \$16 million to support ECE students through 5,400 bursaries.
- For ECEs already in the sector, our investments in professional development programming means they will have more opportunities than ever before.
- It's time that early childhood educators are treated and supported like the professionals they are.

Why have you decided to tie the wage enhancement to facilities approved for the initiative?

- We are working to provide parents with accessible, affordable and quality spaces as quickly as possible.
- We are supporting ECEs at facilities that offer before and after school care, as well as programs for preschool kids.
- However, we know that the cost of care for young children is a challenge for many parents.
- That's why wage enhancements for ECEs working with children under 5 are only available at facilities that are committed to lowering fees for families through the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative.
- More than 56,500 spaces in B.C. are already a part of this initiative.
- The supports for ECEs will help ensure that we have qualified workers to give kids quality early education and child care experiences.

- Roberta, (Facebook comment, Sept 6, 2018)

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- Daljit, (Facebook comment, Sept 13, 2018)

ADVICE TO MINISTER

KEY FACTS:

In November 2019, the Globe and Mail had a request about progress towards \$10-a-day under the previous government. As part of this request, the reporter asked how many families saw the equivalent of \$10-a-day under the Child Care Subsidy program compared to the *Childcare BC* plan.

By August 2018 (the last month of the Child Care Subsidy), approximately 22,000 children were paying \$10-a-day or less through the Child Care Subsidy.

To date, the affordability measures (including the prototype sites) through *Childcare BC* have helped approximately 29,000 children to access care for no more than \$10-a-day or less.

This metric does not recognize the impact that the affordability measures are having on middle-income families. For example, a family earning \$80,000 may now be eligible for up to \$1,260 a month. This will lower the cost of care significantly, but depending on the location and the type of care, it may not drop the cost of care to the equivalent of \$10-a-day.

As of January 29, 2020, more than 49,000 families have been approved for a benefit plan through the Affordable Child Care Benefit. The program has helped families to save more than \$220 million since it launched in September 2018.

To date, approximately 60,000 child care spaces have been approved for a reduction through the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative. Since launching in April 2018, this program has helped parents to save more than \$182 million.

Media Interest: On January 12, 2020 the Globe and Mail published an editorial stating the government was still a long way from universal child care. This included the fact that the number of parents seeing \$10-a-day had increased from 22,000 to 27,000 – suggesting this was ‘a meaningful gain’ but there was more to do.

There have been no further requests on this issue.

Communications:	Brendan Wright	250 356-2028
Program:	Christine Massey	778 698-7121

ADVICE TO MINISTER

**CONFIDENTIAL
ISSUES NOTE**

**Ministry of Children and Family Development
Date: Feb 6, 2020
Minister Responsible: Katrina Chen and Katrine
Conroy**

**Lack of progress on \$10-
a-day**

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

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COVID-19 Child Care Supports

Highlights:

- The Opposition has been critical of government's approach to supporting the child care sector during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- They have proposed government clarify the health and safety guidelines for child care providers, establish a "provider guarantee," include personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies in the Child Care Operating Fund and publish a report on the current status of child care in BC.
- Since the beginning of the pandemic, BC has provided \$150 million to support over 4,500 child care centres and worked with the BC Centre for Disease Control to establish public health guidelines for child care settings.

Contrast:

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Solution:

- Our government has been working hard to support parents, children and people who work in the child care sector during these challenging times.
- Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have invested more than \$150 million to support over 4,500 child care centres.
- This investment helped to ensure essential service workers have access to safe and reliable child care.
- It also has helped parents to return to work as the economy restarts and more BC businesses reopen.
- I'm pleased to say we recently extended this funding through until the end of August.
- This provides more stability for providers and certainty for parents, as their child care spot will be held, free of charge, so they can return to work.
- Our government also provided an increase of \$2 per hour for Early Childhood Educators on April 1.
- This pandemic has shown us all how critical child care is for our economy.
- Child care is a key priority for our government.
- We will continue to make investments in this important sector so BC families can have affordable and accessible child care.

- From the beginning of the pandemic, our government has relied on the trusted advice of Dr. Bonnie Henry and her team to keep people safe and healthy during this pandemic.
- The BC Centre for Disease Control and the Ministry of Health have developed and recently updated guidelines to support child care operators and Early Childhood Educators on how to operate safely.
- For instance, the guidelines include protocols for handwashing and regular cleaning.
- They also require providers to develop a policy and procedures for children and staff to check their symptoms before they enter the centre.
- With every step we take to support the child care sector, our top priority is the safety and well-being of children and people who work in child care centres.

Validators:

- Megan Brame, Operator of Saxe Point Day Care, Esquimalt (June 2020)
 - When asked about the Temporary Emergency Funding, she said: Copyright
- Marcia Macdonald, Group Child Care Owner (May 2020)
Copyright

Validators Continued:

- Jacky Hughes, manager of child care services, Britannia Community Services Centre (June 2020)

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- Megan, BC Child Care Provider (June 2020)

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- **Joyce McMann, Campbell River Child Care Society**

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Background:

- In March 2020, BC announced Temporary Emergency Funding (TEF) to help child care providers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Any provider that receives TEF must hold spots, free of charge, for their existing families who may choose to stay home with their children through the summer.
- TEF is a unique program in Canada, providing centres that are open with seven times their average monthly funding from government to help cover their monthly operating expenses.
- Child care providers that temporarily closed due to COVID-19 are also eligible to receive twice their average monthly funding so they can safely reopen. Smaller home-based child care providers are also eligible for these supports.
- In June 2020, BC announced this funding will be extended until August 31.
- BC is requiring any operator that receives TEF to use any surplus for early childhood educators with temporary wage enhancements or other compensation, such as training or benefits.
- As of June 16, BC has invested more than \$150 million through the TEF to support over 4,500 child care centres, representing over 115,000 spaces, both open and closed.
- The BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) and the Ministry of Health have released health and safety guidelines for child care settings that are supporting child care centres, which were temporarily closed, to reopen safely.
- These guidelines include protocols on how to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (ex. proper handwashing, regular cleaning, identifying kids who are sick, etc.)
- Childcare providers are also required to develop a policy and procedures for children and staff to check their symptoms prior to entering the centre and in the event staff or a child becomes sick while at the centre.
- The BCCDC and the ministry have reassured parents, as they return to work, that their children will be cared for in a safe environment.
- On April 1, BC provided an increase of \$2 per hour for Early Childhood Educators through the wage enhancement fund.
- On April 2, government introduced a new order ensuring essential services, including child care providers, can't be held liable for damages caused by COVID-19, as long as they're compliant with orders from the provincial health officer and other authorities.

Child Care COVID-19 Actions

Highlights:

- The Ministry of State for Child Care has taken a number of actions to support families and the child care sector during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Main Message:

- Our government has been working hard to support parents, children and people who work in the child care sector during these challenging times.
- Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have invested more than \$150 million to support over 4,500 child care centres.
- This investment helped to ensure essential service workers have access to safe and reliable child care.
- It also has helped parents to return to work as the economy restarts and more BC businesses reopen.
- I'm proud to say we recently extended this funding through until the end of August.
- This provides more stability for providers and certainty for parents, as their child care spot will be held, free of charge, so they can return to work.
- Our government also provided an increase of \$2 per hour for Early Childhood Educators on April 1.
- This pandemic has shown us all how critical child care is for our economy.
- We will continue making investments to build an inclusive and affordable child care system in BC.

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- Terry Taylor, SD 10
Superintendent of Schools [Nov 2019]

On the last time the City of Prince George conducted a Child Care assessment in 2015:

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- Chris Bone,
Prince George Social Planning Manager [Jan 11, 2019]

Validators – Accessibility/Spaces

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Sue McKortoff, Mayor of Osoyoos [BC Gov News, Sept 2019]

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[Cranbrook Townsman, Nov 2019]

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**- Brian Frenkel, councillor for
Vanderhoof and 2nd VP UBCM [BC Gov News, Sept 2019]**

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Validators – Accessibility/Spaces

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Gov News, Sept 2019]

[BC

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[BC Gov News, Jan 2020]

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[BC Gov News, Jan 2020]

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Charlotte Streicek, owner of the Dragonfly
Discovery Centre (Incorporated business,
Invermere) [BC Gov News, Jan 2020]

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- Madeleine Cott,
early childhood educator at Little Peak Childcare
(Incorporated business, Squamish) [BC Gov News, Jan
2020]

Validators – Affordability

Parent:

Copyright

Copyright

– Sarah [Gov website]

Parent:

Copyright

Copyright

– Jamie [Gov website]

Provider:

Copyright

Copyright

– Lorraine Lively, Kamloops

Christian School Early Learning Centre [BC Gov News,
March 2018, CCFRI Opt In]

Copyright

Validators – Affordability

Parent:

Copyright

Copyright

– Angelique [Gov

website]

Parent:

Copyright

Copyright

- Tracy Shafer, mom

speaking about CCFRI [March 28, 2018, News Conference]

Parent:

Copyright

Copyright

– Coral [Gov website]

Provider:

Copyright

Copyright

- Wanda Dunn, Owner of

Monkey Do's Childcare Centre (Cranbrook)

[Cranbrook Townsman, Nov 2019]

Provider:

Copyright

Copyright

- Susan Hall-Ford, general

manager for the Douglas College Early Childhood

Education Society [BC Gov News, March 2018, CCFRI Opt In]

Copyright

Provider:

Copyright

Copyright

- Kulbinder Rai, Bright

Beginnings Early Childhood Centre in Nanaimo [BC
Gov News, March 2018, CCFRI Opt In]

Provider:

Copyright

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- Deb Bryant, Association of

Neighbourhood Houses of BC [BC Gov News, March 2018,
CCFRI Opt In]

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Validators – Affordability

Provider: Copyright

Copyright

Copyright

- Lorraine Lively, Kamloops
Christian School Early Learning Centre [BC Gov News,
March 2018, CCFRI Opt In]

Provider: Copyright

Copyright

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- Sylvie Fersch, Arc-en-ciel Enrichment
Centre in Vernon [BC Gov News, March 2018, CCFRI Opt In]

Prototypes:

Parent: Copyright

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Sarah Brownlee, Castlegar [Re prototype sites, Nov 2018]

Question Period Notes – Summer 2020

	GENERAL
	General Responses
	Closing Lines
ORANGE TAB	MCFD
1	Adoption
2	Autism
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4	General stats on reducing number of children in care
5	MCFD COVID-19 Actions
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8	Class action lawsuit - Kelowna Social Worker
BLUE TAB	CHILDCARE
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2	Accessibility – Spaces General
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8	Temporary Emergency Funding
PURPLE TAB	VALIDATORS
1	Accessibility
2	Affordability
3	Economy/Gender Equity

COVID-19: Key Supports

Highlights:

- Key Government supports for people and businesses.

Message:

People

- The **Emergency Benefit for Workers** provides a **\$1,000-dollar payment** to people lost their income.
 - Has helped over 550,000 British Columbians
- A **top up to the BC Climate Action Tax Credit** will provide up to an additional \$451 in July for a family of four. (\$174.50 for adults. \$51.25 for kids)
- Temporary Rental Supplement provides up to \$500/month to reduce the cost of rent and ensure landlords continue to receive income.
 - Over 80,000 renters are benefiting
- A 3-month credit for BC Hydro customers who've lost income. Average credit of \$477
 - Over 100,000 applications have been approved worth more than \$30 million.
- We brought in **job-protected leave** for people unable to work because of COVID-19.
- We got the federal government to commit to providing **two weeks paid sick leave**.
- For the many people who carry student loans, we suspended all repayments until September 30th.

- We secured over 3,000 spaces at hotels and community centres in over 45 communities to support people experiencing homelessness, incl:
 - More than 800 spaces in Vancouver, including 261 for people from Oppenheimer Park.
 - More than 500 spaces in Victoria, including 344 for people who had been living on Pandora Avenue and in Topaz Park.
- We're providing safe hotel rooms for women and children leaving violent relationships.
- \$300 per month COVID-19 crisis supplement for people receiving income or disability assistance.

Businesses

- We cut property tax bills for businesses by 25%, providing \$700 million in immediate relief
 - Average urban business will save \$5,600
- We moved quickly to defer many business taxes until the end of September
 - This includes the EHT, the PST, the tobacco tax, the Municipal and Regional District Tax, the motor fuel tax, and the carbon tax.
- Small businesses that were forced to close can have their hydro bills forgiven for three months – saving an average of \$363.

- We moved to enhance the commercial rent relief program – which provides a 75% reduction in rent for hard hit businesses – by preventing evictions of commercial tenants that could qualify.
- We allowed restaurants to purchase alcohol at wholesale prices, saving them up to 25%.
- We provided \$10 million in grants to tourism organizations, to support marketing campaigns for this summer.
- We brought forward concerns of businesses to improve access to federal programs:
 - the 75% wage subsidy
 - loans for small and medium businesses
- We have provided emergency funding to support child care centres – over \$150 million to support more than 4,500 child care centres.

General Responses

Pivots:

- I'm pleased to have an opportunity to talk about our plan to address...
- It's important to talk about this issue within the context of...

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- With regard to this issue, I think what British Columbians want to see is...

If asked about an issue you are not familiar with:

- Thank you to the member for raising this important topic. If the member can provide additional information, I would be happy to work with them to address this issue...
- It's concerning to hear stories like that, and I look forward to working with the member to support the person in this situation...
- I would be happy to speak to the member further about that specific project/initiative and would be pleased to arrange for further information to be provided by my ministry.

If asked to meet with someone an MLA has brought to the legislature:

- I would be happy to sit down with this person/family to hear their story and to work to address this issue...

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CLOSING LINES

I am committed as Minister to enhancing and improving child protection services in this province to ensure that all children grow up in safe and nurturing environments.

Most important of all, we need to connect kids with the care and support, that a loving family can provide (could be with extended family, a foster family or an adopted family).

This is hard work and we are committed to it [as are social workers] – because we are all focussed on the number one priority which is the well-being of kids in BC.

We're working closely with [the Representative's office/the community etc.] on this issue and I look forward to updating the House on progress when that work is complete.

I know how important this issue is to the member, as it is to me, and I hope we can work together on ways to make truly positive change for children and families.

CHOICES

Highlights:

- Two families who were clients of CHOICES: Adoption and Pregnancy Counselling are involved in litigation against the province regarding the agency's closure.
- Another impacted family has started a petition asking BC to cover the costs of the family's transfer fees to other adoption agencies. To date, 646 people have signed this petition.
- In December 2019, the BC Office of the Ombudsperson notified the ministry of an investigation into the closure of CHOICES.

Main Message:

- We strongly believe that all children deserve to grow up in a safe and loving home.
- We know that the news of the closure is hard for families who had been working with the agency.
- I want to be clear for the Opposition – the decision for the agency to close was made by CHOICES, it was not a decision made by government.
- When their Board of Directors informed us that the agency wasn't financially or operationally able to continue we had no choice but to suspend the agency's license.
- Since then, we've connected directly with all the families to make sure their questions about next steps are answered.
- We will continue to work with all the affected families during this challenging time.

Will BC cover the transfer fees for former CHOICES' families?

- Agencies that focus on international adoptions are independent from government.
- They are responsible for electing their own boards, managing their own funds and determining operating decisions.
- The relationship between these agencies and the provincial government relates to consulting on complex cases, reviewing closed files and investigating complaints.
- In that regard, this past spring, we worked with the former CHOICES board to help develop a plan for their clients to be smoothly transferred to other adoption agencies.
- While it is unfortunate that the new board decided to abruptly close their doors, our goal in making sure families have the information they need as they are transferred to a new agency remains the same.
- That's why staff in my ministry have been in contact with all the families affected to ensure any questions they have about next steps are answered.
- Families continue to be welcome to contact us throughout this process.
- We know this is a difficult time for people and we're working hard to determine next steps.

What about the Ombudsperson's investigation into this?

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- Our government has a great deal of respect for the work this office is responsible for.
- We will, of course, participate fully in the investigation.
- As I have said before, making sure families have the information they need remains our priority and our focus.

Background:

- In January 2019, MCFD was verbally informed that CHOICES was near bankruptcy and without financial assistance they would have to cease operations by February 1.
- In March 2019, MCFD agreed to provide the former CHOICES board with interim funding (\$90,000) to ensure the continual delivery of adoption services for families affected by the closure and to explore a plan to transition files to other international adoption agencies.
- In April 2019, the CHOICES Board of Directors publicly announced that the agency would close as of May 31, 2019.
- Following the announcement of CHOICES' closure, media attention led to an outpouring of public support.
- On April 24, 2019, a board meeting was called, the former board was dissolved, a new board was chosen.
- CHOICES previous 3-year license ended on August 19, 2019. At that time, the agency received a six-month license renewal with conditions from the MCFD's Provincial Director of Adoption.
- On Sept. 27, 2019, the new CHOICES board informed the ministry in a letter that the agency was in financial crisis. CHOICES made the decision to significantly reduce operating costs, pending a final decision on closure or some alternate remedy.
- On Oct. 3, 2019, the ministry met with the CHOICES board, which confirmed that the operation is not financially viable.
- On Oct. 18, 2019, CHOICES closed and the Director of Adoptions has suspended the agency's license. All client files have now been transferred to MCFD.
- On Dec. 24, 2019 the Ombudsperson contacted the ministry with requests for information related to the closure of CHOICES. The ministry had until of Feb. 4, 2019 to provide this information.
- The Provincial Director of Adoption monitors the activities of the licensed adoption agencies in B.C. through a 3-year license process that includes consulting on complex cases, reviewing closed files, investigating complaints.
- Agencies are solely responsible for funding and operating decisions.

Starbright

Highlights:

- On December 20, Starbright Children's Development Centre in Kelowna closed their autism program. The centre continues to run a variety of other programs.
- Media has reported that families are concerned and frustrated about the program cancellation. The Opposition has met with some of the families.
- In January 2020, the ministry conducted an audit of the centre. As the centre currently has a structural deficit in delivering its contracted services, the purpose of the audit is to review its operation and finances.

Main Message:

- Our government wants all children in BC to have the supports and services they need to be happy and successful in their lives.
- That's why we provide a range of services and supports for children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- We are investing \$95.1 million in autism services for children, youth and their families.
- This funding helps more than 16,000 children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- As the member knows, the funding system was designed by the old government.

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- Our government also provides other supports and services, including respite, family supports and early intervention therapies.

Main Message on Starbright

- I know it was difficult for children and parents when this program closed.
- Starbright Child Development Centre ran an autism program that was not part of its contracts with the ministry.
- Staff in my ministry met with the centre and suggested options that would allow them to restructure the program so that they could continue offering this service to families.
- I'll also add that there are a number of excellent programs in the area for Kelowna families.
- As always, people are welcome to contact my ministry if they have questions about which program suits the needs of their child best.

If asked about EHT:

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Supports for Children and Youth with Special Needs

Highlights:

- The Opposition may ask if government will extend supports for children and youth with special needs past June 30, 2020.
- On April 8, BC provided \$900,000 in Emergency Relief Support Funding and relaxed some of the guidelines around services and programs for families who have children and special needs.
- Media has covered the stories of families who have children with autism spectrum disorder, as a number of these families have called for greater supports and additional flexibility with the existing funding.

Main Message:

- Our government knows this has been a difficult time for BC families, particularly for families with children who have special needs.
- In the early days of the pandemic, we heard from families that they were facing a lot of uncertainty.
- We wanted to help, so we provided \$900,000 in emergency funding for families.
- This emergency funding provides a direct payment of \$225 per month to eligible families.
- Families can use this funding for caregiver relief supports, counselling services, or things like grocery shopping and meal preparation.
- We also made services families rely on more flexible, so people can continue to access other funding and supports during this stressful time.
- We will keep working hard to support BC families.

What about families who have children with autism spectrum disorder?

- There is no question that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a great deal of stress for families.
- Our government understands this, and we took early action to help make life a little easier for families during this very challenging time.
- As many in-person school and community-based services remain limited due to COVID-19, we added service flexibility for families, including families who have children with autism spectrum disorder.
- For example, we made changes so families have the option to use 35% of their Autism Funding purchase equipment and items that assist in home learning and virtual instructional approaches.
- We also made changes so families have the option to direct their child's Autism Funding to access family counselling and therapy services.
- Our government is dedicated to helping families.
- We will keep working with all the families we support, to hear directly from them as we together build BC's recovery from this pandemic.

- **Families can use up to 35% of autism funding to purchase equipment and items that help with home learning and virtual instruction.**
- **Families may direct their child's Autism Funding to access family counselling and therapy services with a qualified provider for all age categories through August 31.**

**CONFIDENTIAL
ISSUES NOTE**

Ministry of Children and Family Development
Date: June 19, 2020
Minister Responsible: Katrine Conroy

CYSN Services during COVID-19 Update 2

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- **We empathize with parents, families and children during this uncertain time and we have made service adjustments to prioritize children with special needs and vulnerable youth.**
- **On April 8th, we announced a short-term Emergency Relief Support fund to provide a direct payment of \$225 per month to assist the families of children with special needs who were awaiting services, like respite. We also made our policies more flexible to give families an added level of relief.**
- **On June 22, we extended most of the flexibility measures through to Aug. 31, 2020 and announced a final round of the Emergency Relief Support fund will be available from July 1 to Sept. 30, 2020, helping ensure more families are able to access critical supports.**
- **I urge families who are struggling to please contact the Our CYSN staff, Autism Funding Program staff, and Autism Information Services BC staff to discuss how we can help.**

If asked for more detail on the flexibility measures:

- **The flexible use of respite funding will continue for families until March 31, 2021.**
- **Flexible parameters regarding autism funding and the temporary suspension on maintenance payments for children on special needs agreements will remain through to Aug. 31, 2020.**
- **Families with children in care on a special needs agreement or a voluntary care agreement have their monthly maintenance payments suspended through August 31, 2020.**
- **Eligibility and access to At Home Program medical benefits have been relaxed.**

What about families who have children with autism spectrum disorder?

- There is no question that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a great deal of stress for families.
- Our government understands this, and we took early action to help make life a little easier for families during this very challenging time.
- And we've extended these supports for families through the summer.
- As many in-person school and community-based services remain limited due to COVID-19, we added service flexibility for families, including families who have children with autism spectrum disorder.
- For example, we made changes so families have the option to use 35% of their Autism Funding purchase equipment.
- We also made changes so families have the option to direct their child's Autism Funding to access family counselling and therapy services.
- Our government is dedicated to helping families.
- We will keep working with all the families we support, to hear directly from them as we together build BC's recovery from this pandemic.

Stats: Reducing the number of children in care

Confidential advice to minister – February 2020

- We're seeing the lowest number of children and youth in care in 30 years.
- As of December 31, 2019, there are 5,805 children and youth in care in B.C. –560 less than the previous year.
- Expanded government supports are helping increase the rate of family preservation – for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous families.
- In fact, after receiving supports, almost 91% of all children in need of protection are able to continue living safely with their families. In comparison in 2016, 86% of children in need of protection were able to stay at home.
- Fewer children and youth are being removed from their homes and brought into care. Between November 2018 – October 2019, 1,806 children were removed from their homes. This is 400 fewer children removed than the previous year – and we are committed to seeing that number grow.
- For those children and youth who need protection, we work hard to find them safe and permanent homes as quickly as possible.
- Almost half of children and youth in care find permanent homes within one year through being adopted or by reuniting with family or friends.
- More children and youth than ever before are staying connected to their families, communities and cultures with an increase in out-of-care arrangements.
- At the end of the 1990s, there were 52 children and youth in out-of-care placements. Now, as of December 31, 2019, there are 1,493** in such arrangements, of which more than 1,000 are Indigenous.

Indigenous

- The number of Indigenous children and youth in care is starting to go down.
- As of December 31 2019, there are 3,834 Indigenous children and youth in care in B.C. – 276 less than the previous year.
- This is the lowest number of Indigenous children and youth in care since 2014.
- After receiving supports, 86%* Indigenous children and youth with protection concerns are able to continue living safely in their communities. In comparison to 2016 80% of children in need of protection were able to stay at home.
- Even so, there is still an over representation of Indigenous children in care in B.C. This is unacceptable, and we are working to change this.

*Dec. 2018 to Dec. 2019

Stats: Reducing the number of children in care

Confidential advice to minister – February 2020

- We've amended legislation; we've changed the way we work with and support vulnerable expectant parents, and we've asked social workers to innovate and focus on supporting families to stay together, safely.
- We continue work with individual First Nations and the federal government to sign agreements that will ultimately see the Nations exercise their jurisdiction over child and family services. The ministry is also engaging with Indigenous organizations and the federal government on the implementation of the new federal child welfare law.

MCFD COVID-19 ACTIONS

Highlights:

- The Ministry of Children and Family Development has taken a number of actions to support people during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Main Message:

- We provided Emergency Relief Support for families of children and youth who have special needs.
- This emergency funding provides a direct payment of \$225 per month to eligible families.
- Families can use this funding for caregiver relief supports, counselling services, or things like grocery shopping and meal preparation.
- We also made services families rely on more flexible, so people can continue to access other funding and supports during this stressful time.
- I'm proud to say our government has offered a final round of funding and extended supports for families through the summer.
- We took emergency steps to ensure young people in care and those who were about to age out of care could continue accessing the services they need.
- This included changes to ensure that no youth aged out of care up and we provided additional assistance for those enrolled in our Agreements with Young Adults program.
- These measures have been extended through to the end of September.

What about families who have children with autism spectrum disorder?

- There is no question that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a great deal of stress for families.
- Our government understands this, and we took early action to help make life a little easier for families during this very challenging time.
- And we've extended these supports for families through the summer.
- As many in-person school and community-based services remain limited due to COVID-19, we added service flexibility for families, including families who have children with autism spectrum disorder.
- For example, we made changes so families have the option to use 35% of their Autism Funding purchase equipment.
- We also made changes so families have the option to direct their child's Autism Funding to access family counselling and therapy services.
- Our government is dedicated to helping families.
- We will keep working with all the families we support, to hear directly from them as we together build BC's recovery from this pandemic.

Supports for Children and Youth with Special Needs

Highlights:

- On June 22, BC announced a final round of funding for the Emergency Relief Support Fund and continued flexibility for supports and families with children and youth with special needs through the summer.
- Media has covered the stories of families who have children with autism spectrum disorder, as a number of these families have called for greater supports and additional flexibility with the existing funding.

Main Message:

- Our government knows this has been a difficult time for BC families, particularly for families with children who have special needs.
- In the early days of the pandemic, we heard from families that they were facing a lot of uncertainty.
- We wanted to help, so we provided emergency funding to give a direct payment of \$225 per month.
- Families can use this for caregiver relief supports or things like grocery shopping and meal preparation.
- We also made services families rely on more flexible, so people can continue to access other funding and supports during this stressful time.
- Our government has now added a final round of funding, which will help twice as many families.
- We've also extended other flexible measures through the summer, recognizing the pandemic-related challenges families still face.

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What about families who have children with autism spectrum disorder?

- There is no question that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a great deal of stress for families.
- Our government understands this, and we took early action to help make life a little easier for families during this very challenging time.
- And we've extended these supports for families through the summer.
- As many in-person school and community-based services remain limited due to COVID-19, we added service flexibility for families, including families who have children with autism spectrum disorder.
- For example, we made changes so families have the option to use 35% of their Autism Funding purchase equipment.
- We also made changes so families have the option to direct their child's Autism Funding to access family counselling and therapy services.
- Our government is dedicated to helping families.
- We will keep working with all the families we support, to hear directly from them as we together build BC's recovery from this pandemic.

Background:

- On June 22, the Ministry of Children and Family Development announced a final round of the Emergency Relief Support Fund would run from July 1 to Sept. 30, reaching twice as many families.
- Other flexibility supports for families with children and youth with special needs will be extended until to Aug. 31 or Sept 30.
- The initial supports were announced on April 8 and included a fund of \$900,000 in Emergency Relief Support and added service flexibility for parents of children with special needs to help during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The fund is providing a direct payment of \$225 per month to eligible families for 3 months. A final round is being offered through to September 30.
- Using a needs-based approach, the first round of emergency funding was expected to support 50% more of the eligible families.
- The final round is expected to reach twice as many families on a needs-based basis. Receipt of supports during the first round of funding does not guarantee a family will be eligible for the final round.
- This emergency funding payment can be used to purchase supports that help alleviate stress. These could include but are not limited to: meal preparation and grocery shopping assistance; homemaking services; caregiver relief support and counselling services, online or by phone.
- Policy guidelines for many Children and Youth with Special Needs (CYSN) services have been made more flexible to ensure families continue to benefit from other funding and supports, even as access to many in-person school and community-based services remain limited:
- For instance, parameters on services purchased with Autism Funding were expanded, allowing families to use up to 35% of funding to purchase equipment.
- Also, families may direct their child's Autism Funding to access family counselling and therapy services with a qualified provider for all age categories accessing the Autism Funding program.
- Families can access the Autism Funding until August 31.

Background:

- On April 8, the Ministry of Children and Family Development announced \$900,000 in Emergency Relief Support Funding and added service flexibility for parents of children with special needs to help during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The fund is providing a direct payment of \$225 per month to eligible families over a three-month span (April 8 to June 30, 2020).
- Using a needs-based approach, the emergency funding was expected to support 50% more of the eligible families that were awaiting services. This accounts for some 1,338 unique agreements with families.
- This emergency funding payment can be used to purchase supports that help alleviate stress. These could include:
 - meal preparation and grocery shopping assistance;
 - homemaking services
 - caregiver relief support (e.g., funded support to allow a family member to provide temporary care for a child or youth);
 - counselling services, online or by phone; and
 - and other services that support family functioning.
- Policy guidelines for many Children and Youth with Special Needs (CYSN) services will be more flexible to ensure families continue to benefit from other funding and supports, even as access to many in-person school and community-based services remain limited:
- For instance, parameters on services purchased with Autism Funding were expanded, allowing families to use up to 35% of funding to purchase equipment and items that assist in home learning and virtual instructional approaches.
- Also, families may direct their child's Autism Funding to access family counselling and therapy services with a qualified provider for all age categories accessing the Autism Funding program.
- About 30,000 children and youth with special needs access CYSN services.
- The ministry provides autism funding to families of more than 16,000 children and youth diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

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KEY FACTS:

As of June 22, 2020: the final round of the Emergency Relief Support Fund for families of children and youth with special needs is available July 1 to September 30, 2020. Most flexibility measures are extended through until August 31, 2020. Flexible use of respite funding is extended until March 31, 2021.

BACKGROUND:

Uptake on the first round (April to June 20, 2020) of Emergency Relief Support Fund for families of children and youth with special needs was overwhelming and each of MCFD's service delivery areas now reports the fund is fully expended. Families continue to contact the ministry seeking support through this fund, which provides a direct payment of \$225 per month to eligible families.

The ministry's initial suite of emergency supports and flexibility measures were set to run until June 30, 2020. As of June 22, 2020:

- Flexible parameters regarding autism funding and the temporary suspension on maintenance payments for children on special needs agreements or voluntary care agreements will remain through to Aug. 31, 2020.
- The flexible use of respite funding will continue for families until March 31, 2021.
- Eligibility and access to At Home Program medical benefits have been relaxed.
- Families can use up to 35% of autism funding to purchase equipment and items that help with home learning and virtual instruction.
- Families may direct their child's Autism Funding to access family counselling and therapy services with a qualified provider for all age categories through August 31.

Equipment or materials that support children with autism in their intervention plan usually require the signature of a clinician. From April to June, sign-off authorizations could be provided by parents for eligible equipment. As of July 1, these authorizations again require the signature of a clinician as these authorizations can be provided electronically.

The Ministry first announced the Emergency Relief Support Fund on April 8, 2020, along with added service flexibility for parents of children with special needs to help during the COVID-19 pandemic. The first round of the fund is providing a direct payment of \$225 per month to eligible families over a three-month span (April 8 to June 30, 2020). Using a needs-based approach, this was expected to support 50% more of the eligible families that were awaiting services. This accounts for some 1,338 unique agreements with families. A final round of funding – available for up to three months between July 1 and Sept. 30, 2020 – is intended to support twice as many families.

The interruption of services and supports due to COVID-19 has placed many parents in a position of full-time direct care. With the conclusion of the school year, many families will continue providing full-time direct care for their children with special needs, with limited breaks and continued limitations in support service availability.

Media Interest: There has been significant interest in MCFD support for families of children with special needs during the pandemic, and considerable criticism from the sector of the perceived inadequacy of the measures government has implemented thus far.

Communications:	Angus Noble	778 974-9564
Program:	Christine Massey Danielle Smith	778 698-7121 778-698-7368

Background:

- On June 22, the Ministry of Children and Family Development announced supports for families with children and youth with special needs will be extended until September 2020.
- The initial supports were announced on April 8 and included a fund of \$900,000 in Emergency Relief Support and added service flexibility for parents of children with special needs to help during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The fund is providing a direct payment of \$225 per month to eligible families for 3 months. This has now been extended to September 30.
- Using a needs-based approach, the emergency funding was expected to support 50% more of the eligible families that were awaiting services. This accounts for some 1,338 unique agreements with families.
- This emergency funding payment can be used to purchase supports that help alleviate stress. These could include:
 - meal preparation and grocery shopping assistance;
 - homemaking services
 - caregiver relief support (e.g., funded support to allow a family member to provide temporary care for a child or youth);
 - counselling services, online or by phone; and
 - and other services that support family functioning.
- Policy guidelines for many Children and Youth with Special Needs (CYSN) services will be more flexible to ensure families continue to benefit from other funding and supports, even as access to many in-person school and community-based services remain limited:
- For instance, parameters on services purchased with Autism Funding were expanded, allowing families to use up to 35% of funding to purchase equipment and items that assist in home learning and virtual instructional approaches.
- Also, families may direct their child's Autism Funding to access family counselling and therapy services with a qualified provider for all age categories accessing the Autism Funding program.
- Families can access the Autism Funding until August 31.

Kelowna Social Worker Lawsuits

Highlights:

- In July a proposed settlement agreement was signed for a class action lawsuit filed against the Ministry after a social worker was found to have committed fraud and other improprieties in relation to his dealings with numerous children in care.

Main Message:

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Key Facts and Background:

Key Facts

July 28, 2020 has been set for the hearing to certify the class action lawsuit against the ministry in the matter involving R.S., the former Kelowna social worker alleged to have committed a number of financial abuses to the detriment of children and youth in care or on youth agreements. Terms of a proposed settlement agreement, which the Province has agreed to, are expected to be filed with the court by Class Counsel on July 14 as part of a certification process. The details, which will be publicly available, include the following:

1. Payout amounts:
 - a. Basic settlement for Non-Indigenous claimants = \$25,000
 - b. Basic Settlement for Indigenous claimants = \$69,000 (basic \$25k + \$44k for the Indigenous subgroup)
 - c. Elevated damages (each claimant must apply for these after the basic settlement) = maximum settlement of \$181,000 (bringing the maximum total to \$250,000 for Indigenous claimants and \$206,000 for non-Indigenous claimants)
2. Class certification documents will include R.S.'s PSA file, notably:
 - a. A letter of reprimand;
 - b. 2005 and prior employment reviews with negative comments; and
 - c. Email from University of Manitoba confirming Riley forged his degree.
3. Class numbers, including:
 - a. 103 total claimants, 85 of whom are Indigenous.

BACKGROUND:

In addition, as of July 10, 2020, 21 individual claims (not part of the class action) have been filed – all except one have been filed by adults, all of whom are former children in care who allege to have been negatively impacted by the former employee's actions. MCFD has filed responses, accepted liability in four cases and partial liability in one.

One individual unfilled claim has been served upon MCFD – by an adult, former child in care who alleges to have been negatively impacted by the former employee's actions.

Three of these claims have been settled, as of May 20, 2020; the settlements do not include a confidentiality clause. The other claims are pending negotiated compensation.

On Dec. 13, 2018, the ministry responded publicly to the action filed by the Public Guardian and Trustee.

The ministry had issued an Information Bulletin, after a publication ban was lifted on Nov. 9, 2018, summarizing some of the details in this matter and outlining some of the steps the ministry has taken. Sealing orders were amended to allow more information to be shared with the offices of the Representative for Children and Youth and the Public Guardian and Trustee.

Public disclosure of information beyond what is contained in the two public responses remains legally restricted; however, court documents may be publicly available.

A civil claim was filed in the Supreme Court of B.C. on Nov. 6, 2018, naming MCFD, an ex-employee and interior savings as defendants. A separate civil suit has also been filed in Kelowna on a related matter.

In December 2017, the ministry's Executive Financial Officer was made aware of financial irregularities involving a social worker in the Kelowna office.

An investigation by the firm MNP, at the behest of the Comptroller General's office, determined the employee had misappropriated \$345,283 by establishing joint bank accounts with youth in care, making deposit assistance payments in the youths' names, and then withdrawing those funds himself.

The employee was suspended in January 2018. His employment with MCFD was terminated at the conclusion of the Comptroller General's investigation in March 2018.

Civil and criminal action has been initiated against this individual. A follow-up investigation into the Kelowna office found no instances of further culpability amongst office staff or local management.

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**CONFIDENTIAL
ISSUES NOTE**

**Ministry of Children and Family Development
Date: Updated July 16, 2020
Minister Responsible: Katrine Conroy**

**Kelowna social worker
lawsuits**

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

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KEY FACTS:

July 28, 2020 has been set for the hearing to certify the class action lawsuit against the ministry in the matter involving R.S., the former Kelowna social worker alleged to have committed a number of financial abuses to the detriment of children and youth in care or on youth agreements. Terms of a proposed settlement agreement, which the Province has agreed to, are expected to be filed with the court by Class Counsel on July 14 as part of a certification process. The details, which will be publicly available, include the following:

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 - a. 103 total claimants, 85 of whom are Indigenous.

BACKGROUND:

In addition, as of July 10, 2020, 21 individual claims (not part of the class action) have been filed – all except one have been filed by adults, all of whom are former children in care who allege to have been negatively impacted by the former employee's actions. MCFD has filed responses, accepted liability in four cases and partial liability in one.

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An investigation by the firm MNP, at the behest of the Comptroller General's office, determined the employee had misappropriated \$345,283 by establishing joint bank accounts with youth in care, making deposit assistance payments in the youths' names, and then withdrawing those funds himself.

The employee was suspended in January 2018. His employment with MCFD was terminated at the conclusion of the Comptroller General's investigation in March 2018.

Civil and criminal action has been initiated against this individual. A follow-up investigation into the Kelowna office found no instances of further culpability amongst office staff or local management.

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Media Interest: Once the agreement is finalized, details will be public and available to media. Multiple media outlets have reported on and are continuing to track this matter.

Communications:	Shawn Larabee	
Program:	Rob Byers (re: HR/financial); Cory Heavener (re: youth in care/confidentiality) Janet Donald (re: litigation)	

Background:

- Starting Feb. 10, 2020, the Childcare BC New Spaces Fund will accept applications through two application windows.
- The first of these will open Feb. 10 and end May 11, 2020. Successful applicants will be notified by August 2020.
- A second application window is scheduled to open in November 2020, ending February 2021.
- This approach enables the Province to compare applications over a set timeframe.
- This will allow funding to be targeted to organizations and communities best able to meet child care shortages in their areas and to prioritize applications that create child care spaces that will remain community assets for the long term.
- As well, communities that have recently completed child care needs assessments will have more time to develop targeted applications based on what they have learned.
- In addition, to ensure funding is being used for new licensed child care spaces in as many communities as possible and based on best practices identified through the 15 months of the program, the Province will prioritize projects with a cost per space of \$40,000 or less.
- Applicants will be required to demonstrate:
 - the link between their proposed project and the need within their community;
 - reference to a community child care plan or needs assessment, such as those created
 - through the Union of British Columbia Municipalities' Community Child Care Planning Grant program;
 - and that any necessary professional, administrative and consulting services total no more than 15% of the total provincially funded project cost.

But why are you making changes to the fund?

- When we came into government, we knew we had to work quickly to fix the childcare crisis.
- This mean bringing new child care spaces to communities and families that had struggled for too many years under the old government.
- I'm very proud of the work we've done – our approach has helped to fund the creation of more than 10,400 spaces in just 14 months.
- That's the fastest creation of spaces in BC's history.
- Understandable, our Childcare New Spaces Fund has been incredibly popular.
- To make sure that we're funding spaces where people's need is the most urgent, we made some changes.
- I am confident that our changes will ensure that we are funding high quality and affordable child care spaces for families all across the province.

Changes to Childcare BC New Spaces Fund

Highlights:

- On February 10, government announced changes to the Childcare BC New Spaces Fund.
- This fund will now accept applications through two application windows – the first opened February 10 and ends May 11. Successful applicants will be notified by August 2020. A second application window is scheduled to open in November 2020, ending in February 2021.
- and the Province will prioritize projects with a cost per space of \$40,000 or less.
- The Opposition could raise questions about BC reaching its spaces target, or whether government is running out of funding for childcare.

Contrast:

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